

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/ROC:JPLEONARD:BDS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 095962

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TW, VS, CH

SUBJECT: ROC VIEWS ON US POLICY TOWARD ASIA AND THE ROC

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ITEM FROM EA/ROC WEEKLY STATUS REPORT OF APRIL 24, WHICH IS REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S VIEWS AND COMMENT, PARTICULARLY ON LAST PARAGRAPH:

2. THE EMBASSY REPORTS THAT AFTER A NEARLY TWO-WEEK HIATUS FOLLOWING CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S DEATH ON APRIL 5, THE LOCAL PRESS HAS AGAIN BEGUN TO PUBLISH EDITORIALS ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS. RECENT EDITORIALS REFLECT ROC CONCERN THAT SETBACKS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA DEMONSTRATE THAT THE US WILL BE A LESS RELIABLE AND IMPOSING FORCE IN THE AREA, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF TAIWAN'S SECURITY. THESE EDITORIALS ARGUE THAT IN THE WAKE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN SETBACKS, ESTABLISHMENT OF FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEKING WOULD BE DEMONSTRABLY HARMFUL TO US

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INTERESTS; THEY THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD CANCEL HIS VISIT TO PEKING.

3. CONCURRENT WITH THIS NOTE OF GLOOM AND WORRY, THE

PRESS IN RECENT DAYS HAS HIGHLIGHTED WITH OBVIOUS PLEASURE THE PRESENCE OF VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER AT THE CHIANG FUNERAL SERVICES AND PRESIDENT FORD'S APRIL 16 REMARKS ABOUT THE VALUE WE PLACE ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ROC MADE BEFORE THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS.

4. IN OUR VIEW, THIS PRESS TREATMENT REFLECTS THE ROC'S DICHOTOMOUS FEELINGS ABOUT INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS. ON THE ONE HAND, THE CONCERN OVER US DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT ITS FRIENDS IS REAL. ON THE OTHER, THE ROC PROBABLY APPRECIATES THAT THERE ARE FEW PARALLELS BETWEEN ITS OWN SITUATION AND THAT OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. MOREOVER, IT MAY WELL SEE A SILVER LINING IN THE INDOCHINA GLOOM IN THE FORM OF WIDESPREAD SPECULATION THAT OUR FAILURE IN INDOCHINA WILL RESULT IN RELUCTANCE TO PRESS ON WITH MAJOR CHANGES IN CHINA POLICY BECAUSE OF FEAR OF ALARMING OTHER ASIAN NATIONS OR AROUSING DOMESTIC CRITICISM OVER THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE US WAS LETTING DOWN ANOTHER OLD ALLY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE ROC INTERPRETS THE VICE PRESIDENT'S APPEARANCE AND THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AS EVIDENCE OF THIS NEW CONSTRAINT ON US CHINA POLICY.

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